



*To the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania :*

The undersigned, citizens of Pennsylvania, who are, or have been, actively engaged in the care of the Insane, respectfully represent :

That there now exists a most lamentable deficiency of accommodations for this unfortunate class, in nearly every section of the Commonwealth, and they ask of your honorable bodies, that hospitals enough for the cure and treatment of all the insane in Pennsylvania, be prepared at the earliest possible time.

Of the wisdom, humanity, and real economy of such provision there can hardly be a question. The facts proving this proposition have often been detailed, and are readily accessible to your honorable bodies.

The course proposed will relieve the Commonwealth of the reproach of having insane men and women confined in Almshouses, Jails, Penitentiaries, or what is worse, often than either, put out of observation, neglected and inhumanly treated at their own homes, or in detached buildings near them. For all these, we ask of the public authorities, prompt and enlightened relief, which we believe can be given only by the provision of just as many properly organized hospitals, and located in different parts of the State, as may be necessary to accomplish the object.

Among the insane, now demanding the earnest attention of the Legislature, are those, who have become so, after the commission of crime, or who, for any extraordinary cause, shall have been deemed by the Courts, unfit for admission to an ordinary hospital for the insane, and are now confined in the Penitentiaries and Jails of the Commonwealth. For all these, we deem it the duty of the State to make provision by the erection of a hospital for their especial care and treatment, either with a distinct organization, and in a different locality, or in connection with the grounds of one or more of the State Penitentiaries, and under the same government as those institutions.

Except for those last named, the State Hospitals offer the proper accommodations, but with all of these institutions crowded with patients, no more can with propriety be received ; and the transfer of patients from the Hospitals to the Alms Houses to make room for those now in the latter, offers no remedy for existing difficulties. Besides in every section of the State there are large numbers of excellent citizens, but with



very moderate means, whose only hope of receiving treatment at all, and not becoming paupers is to avail themselves of the wise and humane provision made by the State, enabling them to secure admission to its Hospitals at the very low rate charged in them for the care of this class.— No action of the Legislature is productive of greater or more widely extended good than this. It enables the people to maintain an honorable independence, keeps them from becoming paupers, and gives them the best chance for restoration when laboring under this grievous affliction.

In conclusion, your petitioners, as the result of an extended and varied experience among all classes of the insane, and supported as they are by nearly every one, who is regarded as high authority on the subject, or has had similar opportunities for observation, do most earnestly protest against the inauguration of any system looking to a provision for insane criminals in any one of the existing State Hospitals, or upon any part of the grounds of these institutions, as impolitic, unnecessary, and detrimental to the best interests of the insane.

THOS. S. KIRKBRIDE, M. D.

J. H. WORTHINGTON, M. D.

ISAAC RAY, M. D.

JOHN CURWEN, M. D.

JOSEPH A. REED, M. D.

S. S. SCHULTZ, M. D.

*Feb. 19, 1874.*

